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# Do Sales Person Able to create Gap Between Intention and Behavior in Smartphone Retail? An Empirical Approach.

**David Campbell[1] and C. B. Singh[2]**

[1] Research Scholar, Management, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[2] Head of the Department and Dean of Arts, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

**Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to find out either Sales Person (SP) is instrumental enough to create gap between customers' Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase at retail shop for Smart phones. The study is done by taking sales person of Smartphone and customers of Smartphone at retail store and taking Smartphone as reference product Only offline Retail Outlets are taken into consideration and not Online Retail. Likert Scale is used to capture strength of effect by Sales Person on Intention Behavior Gap. Confirmatory Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to find relation exist or not between sales person as independent variable on Intention Behavior Gap in customers at retail outlets. Customers only from retail outlet of Smartphone are taken into consideration and not online customers. from Structural Equation Modeling analysis, it is established that customers do get influenced by Sales Person (SP) who able to create gap between Intention and Actual Behavior. Lots of studies are done to check influence of sales person on either intention or actual behavior. Present study is one of the elementary studies to find influence of sales person on creating gap between intention and behavior of customers of Smartphone from retail outlet.

***Keywords:*** *Sales Person, Intention Behavior Gap, Smartphone, retail.*

## 1. Introduction

Organizations do appoint sales persons at retail outlets to push their products. These retail outlets may be company owned showrooms, exclusive showrooms not owned by company, multi-brand retail outlet, etc. their main job is to promote their company's product and clear queries of customers. They also help customers in closing the deal with retailer. In small retail shops, companies generally do not provide sales persons as it is costly affair. Therefore in small shops retailers themselves become sales person and push particular company products which pay either high incentives to them or more credit or credit days to them. Normally, salary of the sales person at multi-brand outlet and at exclusive outlet is provided by the brand company. In Smartphone retail, role of sales person is getting importance as Smartphone is high involvement product, competition among different Smartphone brands are increasing and as Smartphone industry is growing with fast pace, company needs to improve sales numbers even if objective is to sustain market share. Many studies are conducted to better understand the role of sales person on consumer behavior. Different constructs are made for sales person and they are most of the time studied with purchase intention construct or at actual past behavior. In the present study, author is trying to study the effect of sales person on the difference between purchase intention and actual behavior. Most of the times customer has some brand in mind for which customer has preference. One can say customer has purchase intention to purchase that particular brand or particular model of brand while entering retail outlet. Sales person present at retail outlet may try to convert customer to purchase product for which he is present. If brand for which customer has purchase intention and salesperson brand is for which he is present to sale is same then sales person could try to upgrade the model that customer is preferring. Therefore it is authors' effort to find first the magnitude of gap between purchase intention and actual behavior through Intention-Behavior-Gap (IGP) construct and after that studying the effect of sales person on that gap.

### 1.1 Statement of Problem

Sales person try to convince customers to go with their products but in the last, it is upto customers that either they want to purchase the product they intended to purchase while entering the outlet go

with other alternatives provided by sales person. Effort to find out either for those customers who are more influenced by sales person had bigger gap between intention and actual behavior and customers who are dogmatic in nature who do not get influenced much by sales person has smaller gap between intention and actual behavior.

### 1.2 Objective of the study

Overall, our objective is to find out the relation between Sales Person (SP) influence as Independent Variable and Intention-Behavior-Gap (IBP) of customers as Dependent Variable. Objective of the study is to find either Sales person instrumental in conversion of purchase intention to purchase i.e. either sales person do create difference in purchase intention and actual purchase.

### 1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of study is Brick and Mortar Shops or Retail Outlets of Smartphone at Jhansi City, Uttar Pradesh, India. It excludes Online Shopping of Smart phones. Population composed of those people who have actually purchased Smartphone from retail outlet only for self or someone other's consumption.

## 2. Literature Review

Various studies are done to understand the role and influence of sales person on customers. Zia & Akram, (2016) studied and highlighted some behavioral characteristics like ethical and listening behavior and customer oriented; Simintiras, Ifie, Watkins, & Georgakas, (2013) studied Adaptive Selling among retail sales person; salesperson effect on purchase intention through trust (Khalilakbar, Heidari, & Jamshidian, 2015), etc. sales person are involved in personal selling at retail shop. As per Kotler & Keller, (2009), personal selling is "Face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders". Personal selling at retail is done by sales person of company at retail outlet. Sales person holds important position in marketing mix as it is only tactic through which companies customize promotion at individual level (Goff, Bellenger, & Stojack, 1994). As per Wilki (1986), sales person plays key role in showing different options available to customers at retail and also help customers to choose best option as per their needs (cited in Goff et al., 1994).

As per Dietvorst, Roeland C., Willem J. M. I. Verbeke, Richard P. Bagozzi, Carolyn Yoon, Marion Smits, and Aad Van der Lug, (2009), Sales persons are able to read mind of customers and their intentions to process interpersonal subtle cues and adjusting future actions (cited in Agnihotri, Vieira, Senra, & Gabler, 2016). Hence, sales person should be able to influence customer decision making by providing not only relevant information but also regulating timing and sequence of key pieces of information (Goff et al., 1994). For this sales person should have strong verbal skills and presentation quality to as one has to actually deliver verbal sales message (Sparks & Areni, 2002).

The personal agents have to own expertly technologies of sales to achieve their sales objectives and also main objective in today era for personal selling is not 'good of sales' but to develop relation between clients and sales person (Kiseleva & Anikina, 2015). Sales person should show expertise in his product domain. As per French and Raven (1959), sales expertise is possession of special knowledge by sales person for the business and should be demonstrated when providing solution to customers' needs mostly by providing answers to specific questions (Khalilakbar et al., 2015) and this strong and long relationships are forted with trust of customer (Khalilakbar et al., 2015).Khalilakbar et al., (2015) found that sales person expertise do influence purchase intention through mediating effect of trust. Not only intention but sales person do influence decisions of customers by providing information (Haas & Kenning, 2014). They are important factor that could influence buying intention (Sun & Yazdanifard, 2015). Salesperson character, presentation skills, etc. play important role in consumer buying behavior (Yousif, 2016). But do purchase intention enough to judge actual behavior? Many authors like Freedman & Jaggi, 1982; Pava & Krautz, 1996; Waddock & Graves, 1997, believe that purchase intention do not lead to actual purchase (Madar, Huang, & Tseng, 2013). It is common observation that customers do not purchase according to their intention (Ajzen, Brown, & Carvajal, 2004). The gap between intention and actual behavior cannot be ignored (Sheeran, 2002).

Many a times sales person try to pursue their own brands which could be different from intended product. As from the above literature one could iterate that sales person do influence intention. Therefore the present question is that are they capable to enlarge the intention behavior gap? Grimmer & Miles, (2017) in one study mentioned Actual Behavioral control which is in alignment with theory of planned behavior of Ajzen, (2015). Actual Behavioral control suppose to moderate intention-behavior gap but as it is difficult to find all variables, Perceived Behavior Control is used as proxy for Actual Behavioral Control in The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2015). In present study, it is researchers' efforts to find out either with the increase of salesperson influence on customer, do

Intention-Behavior-Gap also increases? If yes then it could be concluded that salesperson do influence gap between intention and actual purchase and could be part of Actual Behavioral Control. Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, (2003) in the formation of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) mentioned facilitating condition as reason for influencing behavior directly. Facilitating condition are factors that make behavior easy to accomplish. With multiple role salesperson accomplish in retail environment, eventually incorporates role of facilitator (Erasmus & Gothan, 2004).

### 2.1 Hypothesis

As it is evident from definition and supported by literature review that 'Sales Promotion' does influence customers' buying behavior at retail outlet. To empirically study the approach, influence of sales person effect is studied on gap between purchase intention and actual behavioral gap instead of solely finding effect on either two.

**$H_0$:** The influence of Sales Person (SP) does not significantly affect Intention-Behavior-Gap (IBP).
**$H_A$:** The influence of Sales Person (SP) does significantly affect Intention-Behavior-Gap (IBP).

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

Latent variables for evaluating influence strength of sales person on customer (SP) and to find the magnitude of gap between Purchase Intention and Actual behavior which is Intention Behavior Gap (IBG) for Smartphone purchase in retail are taken. Reliability and Validity is verified by Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Relation between SP and IBG is established through Structural Equation Modeling by using IBM-SPSS and IBM-SPSS add-on software Amos. The study is conducted in Jhansi city. The period of the study is three months.

### 3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Method

Non Probability Judgmental Sampling method is used by the researcher because of non availability of Sampling Frame. Researcher first asked each and every respondents that either the same has purchased Smartphone from Retail outlet or not. If the potential respondent has personally purchased Smartphone from retail outlet may be either for one or for someone other than one, then only one's response could be part of data. The size of the sample is 300. As per guidelines provided by Malhotra & Dash, (2010), with less than five constructs, and each having more than three items to measure and communalities for all items greater than or equal to 0.5 should have greater than 200 sample size for Structural Equation Modeling and for Confirmatory Factor Analysis. As per online calculator by (Soper 2018), with anticipated effect size 0.3, desired statistical power 0.8, number of latent variables two, observed variables 13 and probability level 0.05, recommended sample size is 288 which is less than present sample size of 300.

### 3.3 Instrument and Method of Data Collection

The present study is part of larger study of the researcher. Items for factors are taken from the same study. Scales for SP and IBG is part of researcher's thesis questionnaire which is developed for another study. Likert Scale is used for items capturing constructs. Likert Scale is ranging from 'Completely Agree' to 'Completely Disagree'. Only those customers are included in research if they have purchased Smartphone or for other to use. Instrument is used as Questionnaire most of the time and sometimes as Schedule where respondents are not convenient to read.

## 4. Analysis and Interpretation

Checking assumptions for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), first one is Multivariate Normality under which outliers are determined by calculating Mahalanobis Distance (minimum = 0.944; maximum = 48.767; mean 12.957). With sample size of 300 and measured items 13 with two latent reflective constructs; all responses having Mahalanobis Distance less than 32.8595 considered outliers and got rejected which comes out to be seven. Hence the total sample becomes 293 after removing outliers. Assumption of Multicollinearity is checked and no serious Multicollinearity is determined through Tolerance and VIF values. For all measured variables, Tolerance value is greater than 0.01 and VIF less than ten.

Normality for all measured items are checked through Kurtosis and Skewness and no value is greater than one and less than minus one.

No serious Homoscedasticity is instituted when checked and verified through graph having ZRESID on Y-axis and ZPRED on X-Axis while keeping dummy variable as dependent variable. Loess Fit Line is observed and no pointed turn is present on line. Variances of all measured variables are calculated and no single variable ten times greater than any other variance. In the present study, all Communalities of measured items are above 0.5 have two reflective constructs, one having9 items and another 4 items. In the study, sample size remaining is 293 which is sufficient to carry on with CFA and SEM. From initial findings, Determinant

value from EFA is coming 0 and also there are 6 (7.0%) Nonredundant Residuals with absolute values greater 0.05computed between observed and reproduced correlations. Nonredundant residual percentage should be less than five percent. Therefore Item 'sp8' is removed from the analysis and therefore total items with construct SP remains eight. The value of Determinant now (calculated while performing EFA through SPSS) is 0.001, hence the assumption of Positive Definiteness is not violated. Also, nonredundant residuals are now three which is four percent. Minimum sample size, as per Soper, (2018), for the remaining twelve items is 200 which is more than sufficient to proceed for CFA.

For Model Specification, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is done by scrutinizing Eigen values greater than one. Maximum Likelihood Method is selected for EFA with Promax Rotation Method. Maximum likelihood (ML) is selected as outliers are removed through Mahalanobis Distance and ML is more suitable where multivariate normality is taken care of (Costello and Osborne 2005). Promax Rotation is selected as researchers expect correlation between factors (SP and IBG) which actually comes out as 0.597 through EFA. Sample size for EFA is sufficient as value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.930 which is much greater than 0.5. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also significant (ChiSqr = 2003.238, df = 66, sig. = 0.000) which means at least two variables are strongly correlated and correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Hence, we could proceed with factor analysis. All items are cleanly distributed into two factors in Pattern matrix and they together account for 65.523% of total variance. All communalities extracted is greater than 0.4 for all items. Cronbach's Alpha (α) for SP and IBG comes out to be 0.913and 0.839 respectively.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for SP construct is 0.576 and Composite Reliability (CR) is 0.915. For IBG, AVE is 0.577 and 0.844 get calculated as CR. In both constructs, AVE is greater than 0.5 and CR is greater than 0.7 hence Convergent Validity is established. Correlation is 0.647 between SP and IBG. Square of Correlation between SP and IBG is 0.419 which is less than AVEs of both SP and IBG. Hence Discriminant Validity is established. Under Unit Loading Identification, ab1 and sp1 are identified as they have biggest estimates for respective constructs.

Fit Indices followed in the study with cut-off values are as follows. First is Relative/Normed chi-square (absolute fit index)$\chi 2$/df (CMIN/DF) having acceptance value two or less as per Byrne, (1989). Second is Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), another absolute fit index, which is having accepted value 0.06 and less (Hu and Bentler 1999), 0.05and less(Browne & Cudeck, 1993) and to be at lenient side of 0.08 and less by Malhotra & Dash, (2010). Third is Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR which is Absolute Fit Index) having well fitted values below 0.05 by Byrne, (1998) cited by Hooper, Coughlan, &Mullen, (2008) and 0.08 by (Malhotra and Dash 2010). Fourth is incremental fit Comparitive Fix Index (CFI) having good fit value above 0.95 (Hu and Bentler 1999).

The model under CFA is Over identified with Number of distinct sample moments: 78, Number of distinct parameters to be estimated: 25, hence, Degrees of freedom (78 - 25) = 53 and Chi-Square value = 138.964 in early stage of model specification.

A two factor measurement model is set up to validate the scales and CFA is done to test measurement model. In prima facie for CFA, model indices found fitting the data relatively average with RMSEA = 0.075, , CFI= 0.956, Cmin/Df = 2.622 with ChiSquare = 138.964, Degree of freedom (DF) = 53 and SRMR = .060. Regression estimates of items are significant.

To improvise model fit, modification indices are checked to find any suggestion for error covariance and found that error e11 and e12 has high M.I. value. By cross checking items associated with errors, it is deduced by researchers' understanding that it is case of content overlapping between 'sp1' and sp2'. Therefore covariance is justified between 'e11 and e12'. Under Unit Loading Identification, because of modification, 'sp1' is no longer item having most strong loading on construct and 'sp4' become now having strongest loading on 'SP' construct, 'sp4' and 'ab1' become items having unit load. After the first modification (second model), ChiSquare becomes 120.185 and Degree of Freedom = 52. There is significant ($p < 0.001$) difference in ChiSquare values of both models. Now Goodness of fit are RMSEA = 0.067 with PCLOSE = .038, , CFI= 0.965, SRMR = .060, CMIN/Df = 2.311 with ChiSquare = 120.185 and Degree of freedom (DF) = 52. Regression estimates of items are significant. Another modification suggested by Amos is covariance between Sales Person construct and error term 'e13' associated with item 'ab4' which is an item of construct IBP. First three items 'ab1', 'ab2' and 'ab3' shows difference in intention and actual behavior but item 'ab4' shows difference of intention and actual behavior due to sales person. Definitely there could be justified covariance between 'ab4' and many items of construct 'SP'. Hence the covariance is inculcated in the model between SP construct and 'er13'. After the second modification (third model), CFI is 0.985, RMSEA is .044 with PCLOSE 0.693, SRMR is 0.035 and CMIN/Df is 1.561 with

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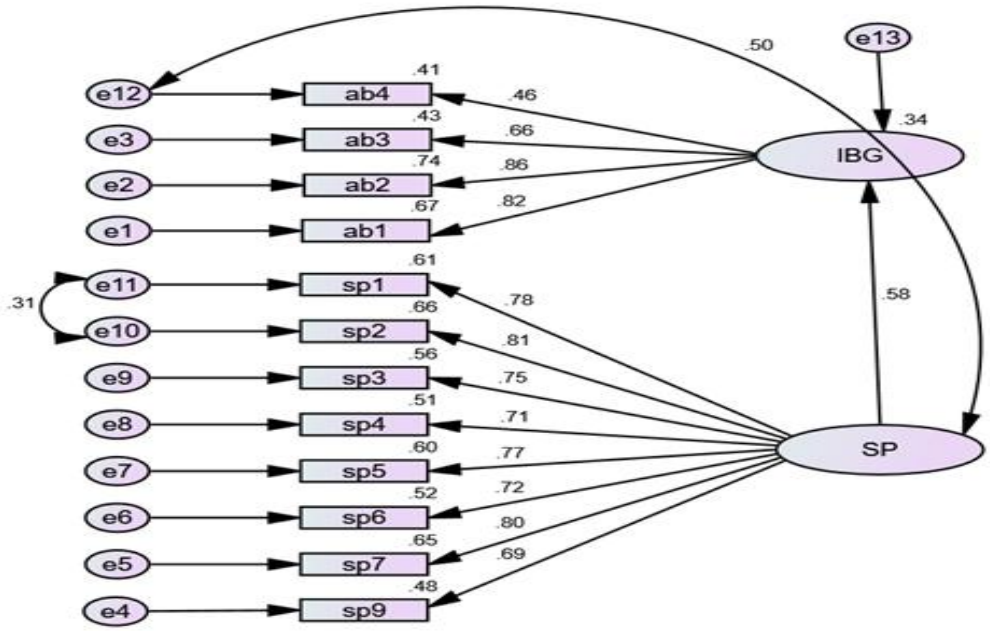
ChiSquare value 79.617 and Degree of Freedom 51. There is significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between ChiSquare values of model two and model three The third model fit values confirms that measurement model is a good fit with clean Standardized Residual Covariance among items as no values are above 2.58 cut off (Byrne 2010).

For assessing structural model to find relationship; following model is proposed. Standardized values are given in figure-1 for relational structure.

**Figure-1: Structural Equation Model (Standardized values).**




Source: Generated by Authors through SPSS Amos.

**Table-1: Regression and Covariance Loadings in Structural Equation Modeling.**

| Items / Constructs / Error terms | Regression / Covariance | | Unstandardised Estimate | Standardised Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IBG | ← | SP | 0.566 | 0.58 | 0.069 | 8.222 | *** | Significant |
| ab2 | ← | IBG | 0.96 | 0.859 | 0.065 | 14.848 | *** | Significant |
| ab3 | ← | IBG | 0.733 | 0.656 | 0.065 | 11.367 | *** | Significant |
| sp8 | ← | SP | 0.98 | 0.805 | 0.075 | 13.128 | *** | Significant |
| sp7 | ← | SP | 0.807 | 0.724 | 0.068 | 11.851 | *** | Significant |
| sp5 | ← | SP | 0.885 | 0.773 | 0.071 | 12.528 | *** | Significant |
| sp4 | ← | SP | 1 | 0.711 | | | | Significant |
| sp3 | ← | SP | 0.932 | 0.745 | 0.077 | 12.136 | *** | Significant |
| ab4 | ← | IBG | 0.575 | 0.459 | 0.077 | 7.492 | *** | Significant |
| sp1 | ← | SP | 0.964 | 0.779 | 0.077 | 12.586 | *** | Significant |
| sp2 | ← | SP | 0.955 | 0.813 | 0.073 | 13.085 | *** | Significant |
| sp10 | ← | SP | 0.968 | 0.691 | 0.087 | 11.188 | *** | Significant |
| ab1 | ← | IBG | 1 | 0.821 | | | | Significant |
| e11 | ↔ | e12 | 0.122 | 0.31 | 0.031 | 3.985 | *** | Significant |
| e13 | ↔ | SP | 0.347 | 0.498 | 0.062 | 5.581 | *** | Significant |

Source: Generated by Authors through SPSS Amos.

In performing structural equation modeling analysis, value of chi square is 79.617 (p = .006) with 51 degree of freedom and CMIN/DF 1.561.As sample size is near 300, it is difficult to get non significant value but CMIN/DF is well below two. CFI is 0.985, RMSEA is 0.044 with PCLOSE value 0.693 and in the last 0.035 is the Standardized RMR. All model fit indices showing that model is data fit. Hence it could be said that model under study can be accepted and analysis could be done for regression weights for relational structure. Both covariance (between e11 ←→ e12 and between SP ←→ e13 are significant. e11 ←→ e12 having value 0.122 (std error = 0.031, C.R. = 3.985, p <0.01) and SP ←→ e13 having value 0.347 (std error = 0.062, C.R. = 5.581, p <0.01). All regression weights for items are significant. The relationship between Sales Person construct (SP) and Intention Behavior Gap construct (IBG) is significant with beta coefficient 0.57 (std. error = 0.069, Critical Ratio = 8.222, p < 0.01).

## 5. Conclusion and implications.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the influence of 'Sales Person' is significant on creating gap between 'Purchase Intention' and 'Actual Purchase'. Sales persons at retail store not only becoming facilitators from their brand side, but also do not easily allow customers to go for some other brand. From the study, it is determined that sales person is capable enough to change customers' choice and make them switch to sales person's own brand choice through expertise. Here, sales person is capable of switching customers' choice related to brand. Companies can and are utilizing sales person for upgrading model of customers' choice. Purchasing premium model from the same brand generates more revenue and profit to both manufacturer and retailer. In the present study, the sample of the size is small therefore multi-group analysis which may be based on gender, age, etc. is not done which may provide more in-depth of the study could provide consistent and confident results if done.

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